

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested. The following remarks are responsive to the Office Action mailed November 28, 2003. Applicants submit that this amendment places the application in better form for appeal by materially reducing or simplifying the issues for appeal.

Claims 1-2 stand rejected under § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. patent no. 6,285,381 B1 ("Sawano") in view of U.S. patent no. 6,001,013 ("Ota").

Claims 3-4 and 6-11 stand rejected under § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Sawano in view of Ota and further view of U.S. patent no. 5,696,892 ("Redmann").

Claims 1, and 8-11 have been amended. In particular, claim 1 has been amended to recite the features of claims 3, 4, 6, and 7. It is respectfully submitted that no new matter has been added.

Claims 3, 4, 6 and 7 have been cancelled without prejudice.

Claims 1, 2, and 8-11 are pending and presented for appeal.

Conclusion

In view of the above, the Applicants respectfully submit that all rejections have been addressed and that the claims are now in a condition for allowance, which is earnestly solicited. Additionally, Applicants submit that this amendment places the application in better form for appeal by materially reducing or simplifying the issues for appeal.

If there are any additional charges, please charge Deposit Account No. 02-2666. If a telephone interview would in any way expedite the prosecution of the present application, the Examiner is invited to contact Sanjeet Dutta at (408) 947-8200.

Respectfully submitted,
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